

Recommendation

For the reasons for this recommendation for approval please see Planning Appraisal section and Conclusions at the end of this report.

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for refurbishment of retained part of existing canopy around Unit 01, new elevational treatment to Unit 01, including a new high level, metal clad, parapet along the South and South-East elevations. New entrance structure and canopy above South Mall entrance. Steel frame with glazing and internal illumination, Refurbishment / replacement of South Mall entrance doors. Improvements to public realm area outside of Unit 01. Re-cladding of the existing canopies on the TK Maxx unit elevation.

The proposal seeks the following external alterations:

- Removal of canopy on the southeast elevation and replacement with parapet cladding PPC Aluminium standing seam detail RAL 7016.
- Recladding retained canopies along the south elevation of Unit 01 and TK Maxx unit with same cladding, PPC Aluminium standing seam detail RAL 7016.
- New external entrance and exit to Unit 01. Doors to be glazed aluminium.
- New aluminium glazed entrance doors to main mall.
- New steel frame and glazed entrance feature above entrance to main mall. (RAL 7016).
- Landscape changes including provision of new Corten steel planter with integrated bench adjacent the parking bays and taxi rank.
- Removal of existing tarmac path and adjacent Unit 01 and replace with Marshals Concrete Paving slabs to match existing paving.

Representations

The application has been advertised on site and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties.

No letters of representation have been received from the public.

Development Plan

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003 (the Local Plan). The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF) and are generally considered to conform. Where non-conformity exists, this is addressed in the Planning Appraisal section below.

Planning Appraisal

Principle and design

The site lies within the urban area and is a designated retail centre as per Policy R7 of the Local Plan. This application does not propose any extension or changes of use and is therefore acceptable in principle.

Paragraphs 131 and 135 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of good design. Policy BNE1 of the Local Plan states that development should be satisfactory in terms of scale and mass and should respect the visual amenity of the surrounding area. While Policy R7 allows improvements to the centre.

It is considered that the proposed external alterations to Unit 01 and the new steel frame and glazed entrance feature are of an appropriate scale and nature for a shopping centre. The proposed materials are reflective of the recent refurbishment of the East Mall entrance which would assist in a cohesion in the appearance of the shopping centre as a whole.

There is no objection to Unit 01 having its own external entrance and the landscaping changes to remove the tarmac path to matching slabs is welcomed. The proposed planter seating is reflective of the food court opposite again providing cohesion to the appearance of the shopping centre.

The proposal is considered to be an improvement to the local centre and in accordance with Policies R7 and BNE1 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 131 and 135 of the NPPF.

Amenity

By the virtue of the proposed nature of the alterations and the distance to neighbouring residential properties there would be no detrimental impact on neighbours' amenities in terms of noise, outlook, privacy, overshadowing or daylight.

Consequently, the application is considered to be in accordance with Policy BNE2 of the Local Plan and paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

Highways

The proposal would not result in any changes to the existing parking or servicing arrangements and therefore not result in any significant highways safety issues in respect of the Policies T1, T2 and T13 of the Local Plan and paragraph 111 of the NPPF.

Conclusions and Reasons for Approval

The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of principle, design, amenity and highway aspects and with regard to all other material planning considerations. The proposal accords with the provisions of Policies R7, BNE1, BNE2, T1, T2 and T13 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 11, 115, 131 and 135 of the NPPF. Accordingly, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.